

## Abraham's Sons: Ishmael

[Genesis 16:4-16](#) Because Sarah could not conceive a child she gave her Egyptian servant, Hagar, to Abraham so he could have an heir. When Hagar became pregnant, she was afraid of Sarah, and fled the land.

However, an angel of the Lord met with her Hagar, and told her he would give her more descendants that she could count. It comforted her that her son would have many children and descendants, but that he would live at odds with the rest of his brothers.

In reference to the prophecy of Ishmael, [The Middle East in Bible Prophecy](#) states: The divinely prophetic words spoken to Hagar are still of great significance today. The prophecy that Ishmael "will be a wild donkey of a man" is not meant as an insult. The wild donkey was the aristocrat of the wild beasts of the desert, the preferred prey of hunters. The prophecy is a reference to how Ishmael's descendants would emulate the lifestyle of the wild donkey, leading a free and noble existence in the desert.

"His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him" similarly refers to this independent lifestyle. Ishmael's descendants have always resisted foreign domination.

Ishmael is recognized by Muslims as **the ancestor of several northern prominent Arab tribes and the forefather of Adnan, the ancestor of Muhammad**. Muslims also believe that Muhammad was the descendant of Ishmael who would establish a great nation.

## Abraham's Sons: Isaac

Fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God gave Abraham a second son, a step-brother to Ishmael conceived with his wife Sarah. God told Abraham to name their son Isaac, meaning "laughter", because Sarah laughed when she heard the messengers tell Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son at their old age, as well as the happiness that he would bring to his parents, [Genesis 17:15-19](#), [Genesis 18:10-15](#); [Genesis 21:5-6](#)). Isaac, in turn, fathered Jacob, also named Israel, the father of the Israelites. Ishmael's and Isaac's descendants are therefore cousins.

After the birth of Isaac, Sarah resented the presence of Hagar and Ishmael even more, and had them sent away. [Genesis 21:8-13](#) states, *The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the slave into a nation also because he is your offspring."*